

Supporting Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD) for Early Readers

How can we support students' Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD) while engaging in the work of early reading?

For our young learners, research points to two clear ways that we can accelerate all students' learning: *systematically securing foundational skills*¹ while *building knowledge and vocabulary*². These content priorities must remain at the heart of our work with early readers.

To do this in ways that support Social, Emotional, and Academic Development, we must foster relationships and a sense of community so that students feel safe and supported in their learning environment. Students need to know that we believe they can succeed and that their ability and competence will grow with their effort. And more than ever, young learners must see value and relevance in what they are

learning to their lives and their very beings. Investing in students' social-emotional development is done by the entire system of adults in schools. This investment is key to promoting engagement in—not a substitute for—teaching rich academic content.

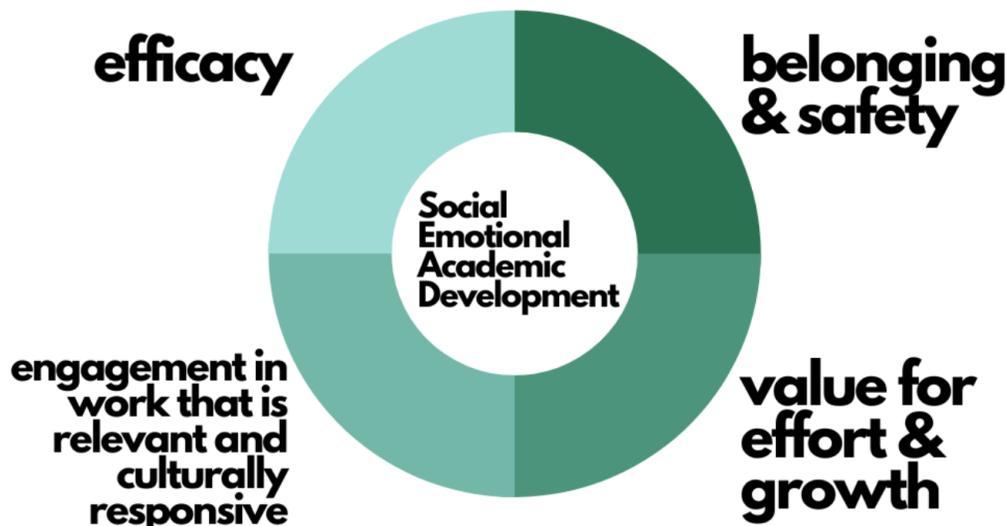
As we narrow the focus and recommit to what matters most to support early readers, research also tells us that four learning mindsets are particularly important in supporting students' academic development.

They focus on students' sense of

- 1) belonging and safety,
- 2) efficacy,
- 3) value for effort and growth, and
- 4) engagement in work that is relevant and culturally responsive³.

Review the chart on the following page for sample actions demonstrating integrating SEAD alongside ELA/literacy instruction for early readers.

A focus on students' sense of...



Aspen Institute, 2019

¹ [Research Supporting Foundational Skills in Reading](#)

² [Research to Support Building Knowledge](#)

³ Aspen Institute. (2019). *Integrating social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD): An action guide for school leadership teams*. The Aspen Institute Education & Society Program.

To learn more about prioritizing instruction around what matters most see: [Priorities for Equitable Instruction: 2021 and Beyond](#)

Sample Actions for Effectively Integrating Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD) into ELA/Literacy Instruction for Early Readers

Facilitate SEAD Through Building of Foundational Reading Skills⁴

While engaging in foundational skills instruction and practice:

- Promote a sense of belonging by including language routines, such as choral reading and word games, so students see themselves as a part of a learning community.
- Empower students to monitor their own decoding skills and fluency through cycles of action and reflection.
- Engage students in reading and rereading to build habits as increasingly independent readers.

Facilitate SEAD Through Building Knowledge & Vocabulary⁴

During read-aloud with complex texts:

- Ensure that the richness and complexity of texts read aloud are regularly available to every student, and that community is built by reading and listening to texts as a learning community.
- Ensure anchor texts throughout the curriculum reflect and reveal accurately a multicultural world and resonance with learners.
- Include perspective-taking in the study of literary texts by attending to how characters might think and feel to support understanding emotions and thoughts. Perspective-taking can also be included with informational text to similarly highlight multiple perspectives or investigate claims, purpose, and reasoning of an author or topic.
- Empower students to monitor their own comprehension and fluency through cycles of action and reflection.
- Provide a variety of text-dependent writing, speaking, performance, or multimedia task options for students to express comprehension, knowledge, and skills.
- Establish student discussion protocols to facilitate evidence-based discourse about text that supports active listening, values diverse perspectives and insights, and ensures there is equity of voice and responsibility.
- Encourage students to draw on their emotional and empathetic skills as they orally express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and arguments.

While engaging in a volume of reading to build knowledge:

- Ensure instruction and materials are responsive to students' existing funds of knowledge as well as connecting students to a shared knowledge of the world through the study of conceptually coherent topics.
- Anchor topical knowledge building in collaborative opportunities for students to conduct research while practicing cooperation, communication, innovation, reflection, self-regulation, and empathy.
- Create space and opportunity for students to identify and explore their own interests and fascinations.
- Develop and strengthen writing in response to feedback from others.



Foundational
Skills



Knowledge
& Vocabulary

⁴ Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD) Sources:

-Allensworth, E. M., Farrington, C. A., Gordon, M. F., Johnson, D. W., Klein, K., McDaniel, B., & Nagaoka, J. (2018). *Supporting social, emotional, & academic development: Research implications for educators*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

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-Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2013). *CASEL guide: Effective social and emotional learning programs—preschool and elementary school edition*.

-The University of Chicago Urban Education Institute. (2018). Cultivating social, emotional, and academic development. In *New knowledge and developments in public education* (pp. 11–16).

Wiener, R. (2020). *Recovery and renewal: Principles for advancing public education post-crisis*. The Aspen Institute Education & Society Program.